

	<p align="center"> Illinois Small Business Development Center Network WEEKLY CONNECTION Entrepreneurship ~ Innovation ~ Technology </p>	
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"Professional Guidance for Business Growth"

June 22, 2015

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Spotlight on Success – MEG & Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour

Southern Illinois veterinarian, inventor and entrepreneur Marc Miles is no newcomer to the services offered by the **Illinois Small Business Development Center at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale**. He first came to the SBDC in 2002 for help in getting his mobile chute MEG (Miles Equine Gizmo) to market. Dr. Miles designed the chute to provide a safe and efficient way to handle horses during procedures that could place practitioners in harm's way. These chutes are now in use by equine veterinarians around the United States and in Canada.

As Dr. Miles began to "dream" about building a world-class zip line canopy tour in Southern Illinois, he again turned to the **Small Business Development Centers at Shawnee Community College and Southern Illinois University Carbondale** for guidance. He purchased 83 pristine acres surrounded by the Shawnee Forest in Union County, hired the finest zip line builder in the US, (Geronimo Construction), and secured funding to make Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour (SBCT) a reality in April, 2013. SBCT provides a way to enjoy the spectacular terrain of the area by soaring through the trees at speeds approaching 40 mph and by traversing high suspension footbridges. Visitors from across the United States and the world have visited the eco-friendly attraction.

In an effort to draw even more visitors to the area, Dr., Miles recently commissioned the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) to design a world-class mountain bike park on the site. The course that IMBA created will consist of 7-8 miles of single track trail with 4 bridges. Difficulty levels will range from beginner to expert. The experience will also include a skills course and a pump track located near the Welcome Center. In addition, purpose built trail accessible to all- terrain motorized wheelchairs will be added to allow disabled veterans, first responders and other wheelchair users to enjoy the forest.

Learn more about the Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour and Mountain Bike Park at <https://www.shawneezip.com/>

SBDC's In The News – TIES

Please click on the link below to see a special feature article on the Illinois SBDC at Bradley University written by their director of technology commercialization, Chad Stamper. This excellent story appeared in a recent edition of Peoria Magazine and does tremendous job in describing the services of the Illinois SBDCs that provide Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Specialty (TIES) services. Please check out this great article. Great Job, Chad ! ! !

<http://www.peoriamagazines.com/ibi/2015/jun/innovation-and-commercialization-discovery-stage>

Small Business Market Update for June 2015

Office of Advocacy has released a new Small Business Bulletin entitled "***Small Business Market Update, June 2015***." This report offers a snapshot of the recent small business economy. It notes that small businesses continue to add more net new jobs than large businesses, for a total of 1.4 million net new jobs through the first three quarters of 2014. The report also examines startup rates, international trade and venture capital. *The Small Business Market Update, June 2015* can be found on Advocacy's website [here](#).

Startup Activity Reverses 5 Year Trend

Nation's Startup Activity Reverses Five-Year Downward Trend - Annual Kauffman Index Reports - Reversing a downward cycle that began in 2010, U.S. startup activity ascended last year, according to the 2015 Kauffman Index: Startup Activity. National business creation findings were released today, and state and metropolitan data will be released June 4.

Over the past two decades, the Startup Activity Index generally has risen or fallen in tandem with the business cycle – up in the 1990s expansionary period and plummeting as the Great Recession took hold. The entrepreneurial activity increase in the 2015 Index represents the largest year-over-year increase in the last two decades, giving rise to hope for a revival of entrepreneurship; however, the return remains tepid and well below historical trends.

In the 2015 Index, 310 out of 100,000 adults, or 0.31 percent, started new businesses each month, on average. In the 2014 Index, the average was 0.28 percent of the adult population.

"This rebound in entrepreneurial activity lines up with the strength we've seen in other economic indicators, and should generate hope for further economic expansion," said Dane Stangler, vice president of Research and Policy at the Kauffman Foundation. "But, it's important to view this short-term uptick in context of the bigger picture – we are still in a long-term decline of activity, which affects job creation, innovation and economic growth."

Most new entrepreneurs – 63.2 percent – were men. The 36.8 percent of females who became entrepreneurs in the 2015 Index is close to the two-decade low of 36.3 percent in the 2008 Kauffman Index. The rate of new entrepreneurs grew for all age groups except those aged 45 to 54, which experienced no change in the 2015 Index.

All racial and ethnic groups – particularly Latinos – experienced increases in the rate of new entrepreneurs between the 2014 Index and the 2015 Index. The Latino share of all new

entrepreneurs rose from 10.0 percent in 1996 to 22.1 percent in 2014. The Asian share also rose substantially during this period. The share of white entrepreneurs declined over the past 18 years, and the black share increased slightly.

A growing immigrant population and the high likelihood of immigrants becoming entrepreneurs contributed to a rising share of new immigrant entrepreneurs: 28.5 percent of all new entrepreneurs are immigrants in the 2015 Index, compared to 13.3 percent in the 1997 Index. If you would like to view the full report please click [here](#).

Maximizing Neoserra – Entering Jobs Retained Milestones

Jobs Retained milestones are entered differently from Change in Staff Milestones. When entering a retained job always put a "1" in the blank box, regardless of what it may say to the right of the box. In the example below ignore the "+1 as of 5/10/15" and simply put a "1" in the blank box. Neoserra counts Jobs Retained differently from the Change in Staff milestone.



The screenshot shows a list of milestones on the left: Intellectual Property Applications Awarded, Intellectual Property Applications Filed, Jobs Retained (checked), New Products/Services Launched, Other, and Patent Obtained. To the right, there is a form field labeled 'Jobs Retained:' with a text input box containing the number '1'. To the right of the input box is the text '+1 as of 5/10/2015'.

Neo Serra New User Training, July 22, 2015

Please register for Illinois Training on Jul 22, 2015, 10:00 AM at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2563933939733346817>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. The training is scheduled for 90 minutes, but Colette from Neoserra can stay on longer if there are questions.

Valued Resources – Best Web Platforms for Your Store's Site

Open the following link to see a list of some of the best sites to use for E-commerce from retailminded.com: <https://retailminded.com/from-hands-off-to-all-in-best-web-platforms-for-your-stores-site/>

Network News and Moves

Members of the Illinois SBDC Network,
Please see the note below from the Left/Right production company and the announcement below regarding a special documentary project. If you have any companies that may qualify please follow up according to the note below.

"We are excited about Illinois as a potential backdrop for this documentary special. I'm happy to share a bit more about this project, but if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

For this project, we would like to spotlight a local strip mall or open-air shopping plaza, that is comprised of a variety of businesses run by passionate, outgoing owners. We would like to find a location that has mostly, if not all, locally-owned mom-and-pop shops. This documentary special would be an opportunity for these businesses to gain national exposure on a program that will celebrate small business successes as well as the struggles that they face.

I would very much appreciate any help spreading the word among your network and community so that we are able to find the best representatives for the show. Might you be able to circulate our announcement (pasted below) to your membership? It has the information about the show, and a shared email address, so that my personal one doesn't get inundated. In addition, if you have any ideas about particular locations that would be a good fit, I would very much appreciate your insight.

Left/Right is a nonfiction television production company that specializes in telling real stories about extraordinary people. We've produced numerous documentaries and series featuring businesses both large (Hawaii Life on HGTV) and small (Small Town Security on AMC), and we've won Emmy Awards, including Outstanding Nonfiction Series for This American Life on Showtime. If you are interested in learning more about Left/Right, we encourage you to visit our website: <http://www.leftright.tv>"

TV COMPANY LOOKING FOR MOM-AND-POP BUSINESSES LOCATED IN STRIP MALLS!

Do you work in a strip mall, shopping plaza, or retail park? Are you and your neighbors outgoing, larger-than-life personalities who are always in each other's business ...and businesses?

An award-winning production company is developing a documentary TV special that will feature the stores, salons and other businesses located in a shared open-air shopping center. We are only interested in strip malls that are comprised mostly of locally-owned, mom-and-pop shops, not national franchises. We want to find complexes with unique businesses and outgoing occupants. Whether you tend the local sports bar, run a video rental store, own a hair salon or something completely different, we want to hear from you! Are you and your neighbors loud, over-the-top personalities who are more like a family? Write to us now!

To be considered—or to nominate others—please write to us at stripmalltvshow@gmail.com with the following information:

- Your full name and contact info (personal number, personal email)
- Name of your business and contact info (address, phone number, email, website, if applicable)
- Tell us about yourself.
- Tell us about your business: what do you do, who do you work with, etc.
- What is the rest of the shopping center like? How many businesses? How do you interact with the other businesses (socially and/or professionally)?
- Please send us some photos of yourself, your coworkers, and your business. Social media or website links are great!

SBIR Road Tour Chicago

As mentioned in the last issue of the Weekly Connection the SBIR Road Tour Chicago event will be held at the UIC Forum (725 Roosevelt Road) in Meeting Rooms, D, E & F. The Illinois SBDC at UIC is a sponsor. Please help us promote the event. For more information and registration details an Eventbrite page has been set up for the conference. The link is <http://sbirroadtourtchicago.eventbrite.com/>.

Please help us promote this very special event by forwarding the link above to anyone you think would be interesting in participating in this workshop. Thank You.

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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and DCEO Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology each Monday to members of the DCEO Illinois SBDC Network to provide the service delivery partners with regular updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. You may send any information to share with the Illinois SBDC Network to Tom.Becker@illinois.gov. Please feel free to forward this update to other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.

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